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Department of State **TELEGRAM**

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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SUBJECT: CIVAIR

1. CURRENT STATUS OF CIVIL AVIATION NEGOTIATIONS DISCUSSED WITH SORO AND TWO OF HIS ASSISTANTS. SORO INFORMED US OF MOST RECENT SOLOMON-ORTONA DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON AND REVIEWED ROUTE EXCHANGES NOW BEING CONSIDERED. SOFAR AS FONOFF IS CONCERNED, THESE ROUTE EXCHANGES SATISFACTORY AND COULD EASILY BE INCORPORATED IN NEW AGREEMENT. THEY ARE STILL AWAITING, HOWEVER, REACTION OF CIVILAVIA; SORO AND HIS COLLEAGUES REMARKED BITTERLY THAT THEY JUST DO NOT KNOW WHAT CIVILARVIA'S POSITION IS SINCE THEY KEEP SHIFTING THEIR GOUND. FOR THIS REASON HE COULD NOT EXPRESS EITHER OPTIMISM OR PESSIMISM ABOUT PROSRECTS OF STARTING NEGOTIATIONS IN NEAR FUTURE, ALTHOUGH HE HIMSELF STRONGLY FAVORS THIS COURSE.

(1)

2. SORO BELIEVES THAT NEGOTIATIONS, WHENEVERY THEY BEGIN, SHOULD BE ON TECHNICAL RATHER THAN POLITICAL LEVEL. HE POINTEDLY REMARKED THAT HE WOULD NOT AGAIN RECOMMEND THAT AMBASSADOR (REFERRING TO CAPOMAZZA NOT ORTONA) HEAD THE NEGOTIATIONS. IN FACT, THE RECOMMENDATION WHICH HE IS SENDING FORWARD IS GENERAL SANTINI.

3. SORO EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT CIVILAVIA WOULD MAKE ITS POSITION CLEAR WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. EVEN WITH THE BEST WILL IN THE WORLD, HE DOUBTED THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO COMPLETE THE NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE JANUARY 20 BUT AGREED WITH US THAT IT WAS WORTH A TRY.

EXEMPT. MELOY

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